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saw it fall compared notes, it was ascertained that at least one or two minutes elapsed between its fall and the sound of the explosion. The sound of the explosion was so loud that many who were sleeping were aroused. They thought that the powder magazine had exploded.—S. F. *Chronicle*, March 3.

DEATH OF JOSEPH A. DONOHOE.

JOSEPH A. DONOHOE, a life member of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific and founder of its Comet-Medal, died in San Francisco on April 5th, 1895, at the age of 69 years. Mr. DONOHOE had been a resident of California since its early days (1850). Until 1861 he was engaged in mercantile business, and since that time he was the head of the DONOHOE-KELLY Banking Company of San Francisco. He took much interest in the establishment of the Astronomical Society and in the founding of the medal which bears his name, although he was too busy a man to have more than a literary interest in science. E. S. H.

THE STUDY OF ATMOSPHERIC CURRENTS BY THE AID OF LARGE TELESCOPES, AND THE EFFECT OF SUCH CURRENTS ON THE QUALITY OF THE SEEING.

Mr. A. E. DOUGLAS, astronomer in the LOWELL Observatory, Arizona, has printed in the *American Meteorological Journal*, Vol. II, p. 397, an article with the above title. It is a study of the air currents which are to be seen within the tubes of large telescopes, and which are such enemies to the best definition. All users of large telescopes are familiar with the phenomenon. Dr. HENRY DRAPER, somewhere about the year 1878, commenced a study of it; but nothing has been printed on the subject, I believe, until the article by Mr. DOUGLAS, except the paper by VENTOSA (*Amer. Meteor. Jour.*, Vol. 7, page 89), on a method of determining the direction of the wind by observations of the undulations at the margins of the discs of the heavenly bodies. The question is too special to be treated here, but attention is called to this interesting paper in order that those more especially concerned may consult it. Copies of the *Journal* may be obtained from GINN & Co., 7 Tremont Place, Boston, for thirty cents. E. S. H.

AN AUSTRALIAN ASTRONOMICAL ASSOCIATION.

"A branch of the British Astronomical Association was inaugurated at a meeting of local members of the parent association, in Sydney, N. S. W., during February, 1895. A thoughtful address was delivered by the president of the branch (Mr. JOHN TEBBUTT, F. R. A. S.), and a large number of nominations were received for membership. Mr. TEBBUTT'S address, which occupied about three-quarters of an hour in delivery, traversed pretty well all the ground which can be covered by amateur observers of the heavens, and included a number of hints to possessors of telescopes as to how they might employ them."

—*The Sydney Herald.*

THE OBSERVATORY OF THE VATICAN.

The *Cosmopolitan Magazine* for March, 1895, p. 599, contains an excellent article by Father J. A. ZAHM, on the observatory—or, rather, observatories—of the Vatican. The article is admirably illustrated with cuts made from photographs lately taken. The observatory staff consists of nine astronomers.

E. S. H.

THE CANALS OF *MARS*, BY MR. J. ORR.

The following paragraphs are copied from the *Journal* of the British Astronomical Association, Vol. V, 1895, p. 209:

"Mr. PETRIE read a paper by Mr. J. ORR, a member of the West of Scotland Branch, on 'The Nature of the "Canals" on *Mars*.' The paper, which had been read at Glasgow at the meeting of the Branch, was to show the almost absolute impossibility of the belief, which at one time somehow obtained popular currency, that the so-called canals were of an artificial character—the work of a supposed Martian race. By ruling grooves on a globe illuminated by a strong light, Mr. ORR calculated that the minimum breadth for visibility of the Martian canals must be about 33 miles. The length of an average canal, as measured on SCHIAPARELLI'S map, is about 2000 miles; and since on our terrestrial canals a minimum depth is required, to insure a constant supply of water at the center (diminished by leakage, evaporation, etc.), a depth of at least 70 feet would be required in the case of such a Martian canal as *Tartarus*. Even granted